

From: Juan Rivero
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 12/14/01 5:03pm
Subject: Microsoft Antitrust Settlement

To whom it may concern:

As a computer user, developer, and educator, I wish to express my concern about the Microsoft Antitrust Settlement. My understanding of the matter is that Microsoft has been found guilty of Sherman Act violations, and that the public has been asked to comment on the penalty phase of the case. It is my opinion that the settlement, as currently stated, does nothing to remove the Microsoft monopoly and in fact enhances it.

As far as I can determine, Microsoft is not required to take any significant steps to relinquish its monopoly of the Software Systems market. At a bare minimum, the settlement should additionally:

- (1) Require full publication of all file formats, especially those of Word Processors and Spreadsheets, so that competitors can produce equivalents of e.g. MS Word without being unduly handicapped by proprietary formats.
- (2) Require that any network protocols invented by Microsoft be approved by an independent organization, in the same way that other protocols are.
- (3) Require that retailers be permitted to sell computers with any operating system at all (including none) preinstalled, and adjust the price of their machines accordingly.

The issue of open file formats is extremely important, as MSWord files exchanged over networks have become a **de facto** standard for both business and governments; these organizations are reluctant to consider any alternatives to Microsoft operating systems because of the unavailability of MSWord-compatible products on the alternative platforms.

If a national security issue is at stake here, as the judge apparently has suggested, then all the more reason not to extend the Microsoft monopoly. The National Security Agency, who is surely qualified to judge, has stated for example that Windows NT is not auditable. In this case, it becomes desirable to allow alternative platforms an opportunity to enter the market without undue hindrance.

This opinion is my own, and in no way do I pretend to represent the University of Alaska or any other institution.

Yours,

Juan Rivero

Dr. Juan Rivero, University of Alaska Southeast

<http://www2.jun.alaska.edu/~jfjr> email: juan.rivero@uas.alaska.edu
